

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed May 17, 2007 has been carefully considered. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested. Within the Office Action Claims 1, 3, 17, 18 and 20 have been rejected. Claims 1, 17, 20 have been amended.

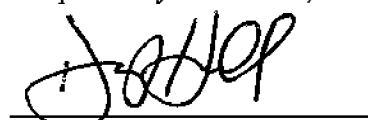
35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1, 3, 17, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Hiraka (U.S. Patent No. 5,987,573). This rejection is moot in light of the above Amendment. It is believed that this Amendment places the above-identified patent application into condition for allowance. Early favorable consideration of this Amendment is earnestly solicited.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 02-4270.

Respectfully submitted,



Darryl H. Hall
Reg. No. 58,184
THELEN REID BROWN RAYSMAN & STEINER LLP
P.O. Box 1510
New York, NY 10150-1510
Tel. (212) 603-2000
Fax. (212) 208-4552

Dated: August 17, 2007